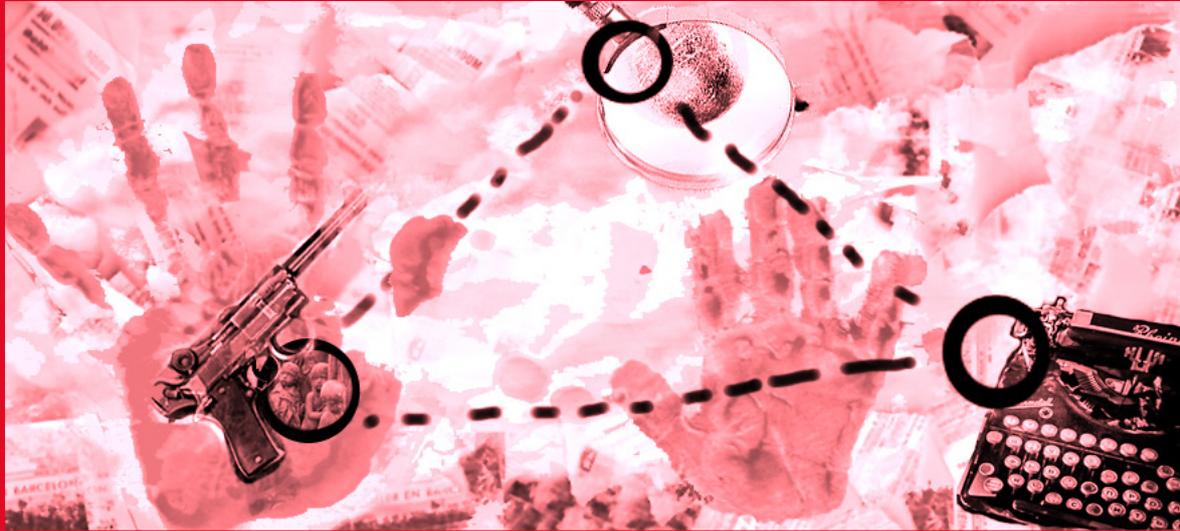


#14

TRIANGULAR
NARRATIVES.
APPROACHES TO
GENRE COMBINATION
IN THE CONTEMPORARY
NOVEL

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Abstract || In this article I explore the notion of narrative triangles (the fusion of three different genres) through the study of two important contemporary works: *Anatomía de un instante*, by Javier Cercas, and the French novel *HHhH*, by Laurent Binet. I show how contemporary writers are creating a specific type of novel through the combination of different narrative genres, each of which potentially keeps its original function as, in these particular cases, a novel, a historiographical work and an essay.

Keywords || Contemporary Narrative | Genre Theory | Interdiscursivity | Hybridization | Javier Cercas | Laurent Binet

0. Narrative genres in combination

The classic postulation which argued that literary genres differed completely from one another and ought to remain separate, that is to say, without merging, has less relevance today than ever before. It could even be stated that, of all the mechanisms that play a part in literary change, the phenomenon of genre combination is the one that has altered the structure of genres most over the course of the 20th and 21st centuries. In this sense, although it is true that the most significant transformation of the canon is thanks to the Avant-guard, and that the present boom of genre fusion is linked to the globalizing phenomena of recent decades, it is worth paying attention to other transitions to which that first Aristotelian classification has been subject over the centuries and to its alterations (Frye, 1957; Fowler, 1982; Todorov, 1990; Wellek and Warren, 2009), even during periods of major adherence to the classical legacy, in order to explain certain contemporary literary phenomena. In the sphere of narrative, and more precisely, in the context of respecting genre purity, one of the fundamental works in the study of literary combination came to light: *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759-1767) by Laurence Sterne.

In *Tristram Shandy*, the autobiographical genre seems to prevail from the start, with a first person narrator who begins by relating his birth. This initial experiment dissolves as the storyline gradually vanishes, so that the narration flows without any obvious order or direction via those “opinions” which, in certain passages, maintain a narrow relation to the essay. Sterne avoids genre unity, instead creating a discourse that leaps from autobiography to essay, from sermon to travel account, and even makes use of passages that surpass the limits of literary canon, such as, for example, the announcement in which the narrator puts a dedication up for sale in case any reader were interested in having his name inscribed on future editions of the work (Chapter 9, Book I). This Rabelaisian style humour and lack of respect for the literary conventions of Cervantine influence earned him much negative criticism. In fact, many of his contemporaries predicted a short life for Sterne’s work due to its exceeding strangeness. Today it can be confirmed that those voices were wrong. There are some who have even noted that the novel reached its maturity with works such as *Tristram Shandy* after having received nourishment from genres such as epistolary, diary, travel log, memoir, comedy, epic and romance (Wellek and Warren, 2009; 278). Despite the work having being conceived during a century clinging to the distinction and separation of genres, combination was already (because it had always been) one of the principal driving forces of change in the literary system (Todorov, 1990: 15). By following untethered from the classical triad, that necessity which existed to create a kind of mixed

genre in which all literary output could converge (Segre, 1985: 280) was supremely expressed in a work like *Tristram Shandy*.

However, it would be necessary to wait until the coming of romanticism for the novel to become established as a genre. Along with the 19th century model came a new feature, which, as Goytisolo (2013: 99) noted, was decisive in the subsequent development of the genre: the objective technique of the story, that is to say, the distance of the narrator in relation to events and characters. So now there was an objective narrator, plausible, who grew and ended up being imperative, almost paradoxically, in a context characterised by the emergence of the testimonial genres. But if the 19th century novel established the objective point of view in the story, the complex interdiscursive network that had taken shape in Sterne's work would represent a no less important antecedent to the evolution of the novel during the 20th century: that broken narrative laid the foundation for the digression onto which the base of interior monologue would settle. Just as the type of novel exemplified by Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1856) does not endure, even today, merely due to an imitation of objective point of view, but rather due to the existence of a structural model thoroughly assimilated as much by authors as by readers, the kind of narration in *Tristram Shandy* enjoys relevance not only because it established narrative digression, but also due to the presence of a model in which the writers have gone on finding numerous possibilities of narrative constructions. In other words, searching out alternatives to the 19th century model, the authors of the 20th century look once more to a century that clung to the classical division of genres, the 18th century, in order to take as their example an interdiscursive, transgenre and interdisciplinary character work (Albaladejo, 2005; 2012). Though it was unappreciated by the more conservative criticism of the era and even alienated by two immediate precedents – *Pamela* (1741) by Samuel Richardson and *Tom Jones* (1749) by Henry Fielding, *Tristram Shandy* would remain at the base of transcendental works in the modern narrative, as was the case with Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922). We can concur with Goytisolo that the style of novel featuring a highly subjective component, characterised by the use of internal monologue, was prevailing over the objective novel, constructed by means of an omniscient narrator, at least until the second half of the last century. From this point another kind of novel began to develop that would transform the panorama of narrative genres by recuperating the realist technique that remained the narrative basis of the non-fiction novel, and did so by the hand of American New Journalism. By merging with reportage, the 19th century model found in the journalistic genres a transcendental position. It is certain that the way had been paved as much by the realist model as by the multiple possibilities already demonstrated by certain narrative genres in combination. However, a work such as Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* (1966) brought with it a nuance that defied the barriers

of the literary canon. It made way for a type of novel that, thanks to its interdiscursive, transgenre and interdisciplinary condition, fulfilled a simultaneous function in another genre paradigm: the journalistic genres. As Tom Wolf wrote, those journalists wanted to do something that would be on a par with the great writers, they wanted to leave works for posterity (Wolf, 1973: 21-22). In the process of working towards their purpose, they perfected an aspect of combination: the novel ceased to be understood as an integrated sum of literary forms or genres with a subsidiary or metaliterary function within the text, as was the case in *Tristram Shandy*, *Pamela*, *The Magic Mountain* (1924) by Thomas Mann, *The Man Without Qualities* (1940) by Robert Musil or *Pale Fire* (1962) by Nabokov. The novel had acquired the capacity to be read and still maintain the functions socially assigned to each of its genres in combination.

In a close parallel, the 1970s saw a resurgence of the autobiographical genre, which, in combination with the novel, marked the birth of a model that was similarly decisive in the study of combination in contemporary narrative: autofiction – a term coined by Serge Doubrovsky to describe the genre of his novel *Fils* (1977). This combination of truth and autobiographical fiction would separate from autobiography and fictional memoirs through the integration of author, narrator and character in a single narrative instance (Alberca, 2007). And so definitively leaving behind the narrative masks (such as that used by Sterne), and modernising that expression without precedent of Montaigne's, who, in giving his opinion on certain subjects, confirmed he was speaking solely of himself (Frame, 2003: xvii), the incorporation of the figure of the author into the text benefitted a combination of essay and novel. This would subsequently extend to the non-fiction novel, opening the way, as we shall explore next, to the treatment of historical subjects without for a moment abandoning the sphere of literature.

1. Triangular narratives. Historiography, essay and novel

If the writers of *New Journalism* wished to deal with reality by making use of the techniques of realist fiction, contemporary novelists would equally explore present reality as much as historic, while also respecting the premises of the genres in combination. As well as the bidirectional models of novel and reportage, novel and essay or novel and autobiography, there exist other examples of works which illustrate a tendency towards a tridirectional model. Also of an interdiscursive, transgenre and interdisciplinary character, the respective functions of the genres which form this model actively coexist, allowing for a reading that flows between each genre without

any of them completely vanishing in favour of another. In this sense, compared with models of combination constructed through forms, in which the novel absorbs and incorporates the other discourses cancelling their original function (as happens with the combination of notes that follow the poem in *Pale Fire* or even the text itself of *Bartleby y compañía*, by Enrique Vila-Matas), these triangular narratives respond to a model of hybrid combination in which the functions socially assigned to each of its genres are conserved by incorporating certain discursive features that allow the text to be read according to the precepts of each of the genres from which it is formed.

In order to explore these limits and transitions in contemporary narrative, this paper will analyse the works *Anatomía de un instante* (2009; from now on, *Anatomía*) by Javier Cercas and *HHhH* (2010) by Laurent Binet, in which both authors explore two matters of an historical nature while avoiding the use of fiction. A combination of the historiographical, essay and novel forms, along with a subtle technical play of first person narrative, will call into question the idea of subjective valuation that inevitably exists as the basis of any kind of narrative text, including those of historiographical character (Hayden White, 1980: 27). In both works, the first person narrator not only represents the figure of the author, but also corresponds willingly with him and incorporates itself into the story as its own character. Unlike autofiction, this triple narrative instance (author, narrator and character) will not now be a protagonist of the historical plot, thereby avoiding a subjective approximation, but will instead participate in it, fundamentally connecting its role to analysis and argument. In these triangular narratives one genre assumes dominance, the novel in *HHhH*, and the chronicle in *Anatomía*. They respectively occupy the upper apex of each work, but in the transitions from one genre to another, the reader has the sensation that the novel has shifted to a lower vertex and that the essay has moved into the foreground to establish itself further on in the sphere of historiography.

If autofiction had already combined autobiographical fiction and reality with essay, the works of Cercas and Binet present a series of common characteristics that highlight the impact of a new novelistic model. Though neither belong in the genre of the historical novel, both fully submerge themselves in the most real and documented history. The historical events no longer represent a background, context or pretext, inhabited by characters who manipulate the effect of fiction, but rather the narrative treatment makes both works move away considerably from the historical novel: accounts and characters become objects of investigation and interpretation. In fact, the two arrange their narrative core along similar lines: the presence of a character of historical significance linked to a concrete incident in his life. On the one hand, Adolfo Suárez, the first democratically

elected Spanish prime minister of the post-Franco era, and on the other, Reinhard Heydrich, chief of the Gestapo during the forging and expansion of the Third Reich. The first is narratively linked with the coup d'état of the lieutenant colonel Antonio Tejero. The second to the military operation that brought Heydrich's life to an early end: Operation Anthropoid. Neither of the two works actually constitutes a biography of its characters. In fact, the characterisation of both is more of an approach at developing the novelistic character, but both extend from analysis and reconstruction as much of Suárez as of Heydrich and of all those secondary characters who are going to accompany them in their respective adventures. Through them, the plot will take shape without the characterisation of any of the figures appearing to be connected to fiction, despite which both authors will weigh the importance of that choice in the opening discourse of the work. Another aspect that *HHhH* and *Anatomía* have in common is the intention of approximation on the part of the narrator to the events through similar narrative strategies: investigation, analyses of sources, contradictions or even personal recollections. The addition of this mix of personal notes and references to the process of investigation means that both works navigate towards a type of genre that maintains links with what has been considered a novelistic subgenre (Fowler, 1982), the *work in progress*, understood as the story that is gradually being constructed at the same time its plot progresses, and which, in these two works, is surpassed thanks to its essay style features. It is worth emphasising that *Anatomía* and *HHhH* won prizes in 2010, the Premio Nacional de Narrativa and the Goncourt award respectively, recognising to some degree the acceptance of the narrative model they represent.

1.1 *Anatomía de un instante*

The work of Javier Cercas revisits one of the transcendental incidents of recent Spanish history: the storming of the Congress of Deputies during the vote to elect Calvo Sotelo as prime minister, and the failed coup d'état in which Tejero played a leading role. The moment that the author dissects is that in which the shots fly over the heads of the attendees while Adolf Suárez remains in his seat. It deals with a gesture that in turn generates numerous other gestures serving to join characters and plots to a work full of sources, threads, hypotheses, propositions and narration:

Dice Borges que «cualquier destino, por largo y complicado que sea, consta en realidad de un solo momento: el momento en el que el hombre sabe para siempre quién es». Viendo aquel 23 de febrero a Adolfo Suárez sentado en su escaño mientras zumbaban a su alrededor las balas en el hemiciclo desierto, me pregunté si en ese momento Suárez había sabido para siempre quién era y qué significado encerraba aquella imagen remota, suponiendo que encerrase alguno. Esta doble pregunta no me abandonó durante los días siguientes, y para intentar contestarla —o mejor dicho: para intentar formularla con precisión— decidí escribir una novela. (Cercas, 2010: 18)

But that novel will never arrive in the hands of the reader: it will fail, as the author explains, because after having written a first draft, he arrived at the conclusion that a novel about 23-F required detailed research that, no sooner begun, made him understand that the reality of the coup imposed itself on any type of fiction based on it. Consequently, what results is a book that arises from the failure of a novel and that, without being a 'historical novel', does not actually refuse to be read as such and, despite the story being constructed by means of the truth of the facts and characters, neither does it refuse being read as a novel. Such is the author's approach and this is how he establishes things in the first pages of the book, during the introductory chapter entitled, 'Epílogo para una novela'. In said epilogue the author links the notions of reality and irreality as much with the television as with the recording of the coup d'état, as well as to the narrative basis of what the author had already referred to as 'relato real' (Cercas, 2000: 16). Subsequently, by incorporating the essay of ideas, the causes and consequences of the coup will be analysed allowing the text to be read, additionally, as a kind of historical chronicle.

The transition from this introductory epilogue to the first section of the work, entitled 'La placenta del golpe', illustrates the transition from one genre to another. The 'I' that permeates the start of the work and relates its tribulations at the time of writing a novel gives way to a character who will take up the study carried out by this narrative instance in the first person: "El gesto de Suárez es un gesto que significa, aunque no sepamos exactamente qué significa" (Cercas, 2010: 34); and who after outlining the various hypotheses about this 'gesture, introduces the historical account in search of responses:

Es verdad que durante el otoño y el invierno de 1980 la clase dirigente española se ha entregado a una serie de extrañas maniobras políticas con el objetivo de derribar del gobierno a Adolfo Suárez, pero solo es verdad en parte que el asalto al Congreso y el golpe militar sean resultado de esa confabulación universal. (Cercas, 2010: 39)

Note also that the central body of *Anatomía* is divided into five parts: 'La placenta del golpe', 'Un golpista frente al golpe', 'Un revolucionario frente al golpe', 'Todos los golpes del golpe', '¡Viva Italia!'. In the first section all the civil and military operations designed to do away with Suárez are reconstructed. The second centres on the figure of Gutiérrez Mellado, who will be characterised in such a way that it will not be possible to explain certain aspects of the principal character, Suárez, without him. The same is true with the character of Santiago Carrillo in the third section. These figures will be developed along similar lines to characters in a regular novel, and during the analysis of sources and reflection on the analysed material, they are connected with another three characters who will be their respective antagonists: Milans del Bosch, Armada and

Tejero. In this way the author creates the effect of a story that has its perfect headcount of characters.

But this triple relation will come to represent the idea that the coup was in fact made up by three coups: one by each protagonist. Consequently, the coup fails because each of its organisers had a different objective. In this way, the run through of these ideas constitutes a theory of historical character that could be accepted as the result of said investigation. In the face of this, the 'Prólogo de una novela' with which the book ends completes this play of *alter text* that began with the 'Epílogo' that opens the work, and perfects the triangular narrative thanks to a return to the first person narration, allowing for different readings and interpretations of the nature of the text:

Lo entendí. Creo que esta vez lo entendí. Y por eso unos meses más tarde, cuando su muerte (la del padre del autor) y la resurrección de Adolfo Suárez en los periódicos formaron una última simetría, la última figura de esta historia, yo no pude evitar preguntarme si había empezado a escribir este libro no para intentar entender a Adolfo Suárez o un gesto de Adolfo Suárez sino para intentar entender a mi padre, si había seguido escribiendo para seguir hablando con mi padre, si había querido terminarlo para que mi padre lo leyera y supiera que por fin había entendido, que había entendido que yo no tenía tanta razón y él no estaba tan equivocado, que yo no soy mejor que él, y que ya no voy a serlo. (Cercas, 2010: 437)

1.2 HHHH

This more personal and autobiographical aspect also plays an important role in the conception and development of the narrative structure of *HHhH*. In presenting the origin and motivations behind his work, Binet expresses the following:

No recuerdo exactamente cuándo me habló mi padre de esta historia por primera vez, pero vuelvo a verlo, en mi cuarto de HLM, pronunciando las palabras «partisanos», «checoslovacos», quizá la de «atentado», con toda certeza la de «liquidar», y a continuación esta fecha: «1942» Yo había encontrado en su biblioteca una Historia de la Gestapo, escrita por Jacques Delarue, y había empezado a leer algunas páginas. Mi padre al verme con ese libro en las manos, me hizo algunos comentarios de pasada: mencionó a Himmler, el jefe de la SS, y luego a su brazo derecho, Heydrich, protector de la Bohemia-Moravia. Me habló de un comando checoslovaco enviado por Londres y de ese atentado. [...] También emprendo este libro para devolverle algo de eso: el resultado de unas pocas palabras ofrecidas a un adolescente por ese padre que, en aquel entonces, no era todavía profesor de historia pero que, con unas cuantas frases imperfectas, sabía contarla muy bien. (Binet, 2011: 11)

Laurent Binet's first work, *HHhH*, reconstructs one of the significant heroic feats of the resistance during World War II: the assassination

of Reinhard Heydrich in Prague. The attack was part of one of the operations directed by the Czech government during its exile in England. The mission, known as Operation Anthropoid, was brought about by the paratroopers Kubiš and Gabčík who, with the help of the Czech resistance, managed to end Heydrich's life, although they did not escape the city alive. The narrator coincides with the figure of the author himself who in turn is one of the characters in the story, explicitly refusing to renounce his true identity, that is, Laurent Binet. This author-narrator-character does not form part of the account of Heydrich and Operation Anthropoid, but rather, as happens with *Anatomía*, fulfils the narrative function of a unifying thread. In this sense, Binet says he wants to write a novel about Operation Anthropoid, but behind the title of *HHhH* hides the phrase 'Himmlers Hirn heist Heydrich' ('Himmlers brain is called Heydrich'), so the narration, including the preparation for the attack, the historical context and the characters, will be constructed principally around said figure.

In this novel the narrator seems so full of prejudice regarding the genre of novelistic fiction (more specifically with the historical novel) that he ends up reassessing its foundations: "Hay algo más vulgar en realidad que un personaje inventado?", and he adds: "Sé que reduzco a este hombre (Gabčík) al vulgar acto de personaje, y sus actos al de la literatura" (Binet, 2011: 11). So to alleviate his literary malaise, the author will analyse numerous sources originating from the annals of history, cinematographic productions, literary works and a great many others that come from personal investigation. The objective is none other than to be as accurate as possible in his interpretation, his handling the facts and his reconstruction of a story faithful to the events. Binet also establishes, among other rules, that the dialogue of his account will be invented, except for that which comes from reliable sources. With this particular approach, the author tries, against the odds, to write a novel that takes history as its raw material, but also moves away from fiction, from the encyclopaedic manual of history and in turn, from the historical novel. Binet is testing out new forms and expanding the boundaries of the genre.

From the point of view of its external structure, the work is divided into two parts. In the first, the historical context of Heydrich's life, the forging of Operation Anthropoid and World War II as well as the lead up to it are reconstructed. The second part, somewhat more irregular in expanse and approach, depicts the immediate consequences of the attack. The internal structure of *HHhH* is, however, more complex. There are a huge number of themes contained within the 257 sequences of which the book is composed, which can be reduced to four fundamental categories. Firstly, he examines 'Operation Anthropoid', which includes all the preparations for the attack, the profiles of its heroes, their lives within the Czech resistance and the

perpetration of the attack. The second category is the ‘Historical context’, through which the author explains how the relations between each of the participating countries gradually develops, as well as the principle characters prior to and during the war. The third category is ‘Treatment of the writing’, in whose episodes the author will present his process of analysing the information and its application to the writing process. And the final category is ‘Heydrich’, whose sections will highlight the character by adopting different angles, such as his family or his life in service of the Reich.

‘Treatment of the writing’ is the frame within which the narration develops into an essay on how to write a specific type of novel. ‘Heydrich’, ‘Historical context’ and ‘Operation Anthropoid’ prefigure the historical component of the work. But all this ought to be considered within a broader framework, given that *HHhH* could be considered as a novel that reconstructs the life of Heydrich and the attack that finished him, but all in a context in which we gain insight into the efforts of Binet, who wants to write a novel of historiographical character while trying at all costs to avoid entering into the realm of the historical novel. Once again, as happened in *Anatomía*, the narrative instance in first person brings the essayist function closer to the historical function and, on the other hand, to the novel, allowing the reader to partake in the reconstruction of the World War II context, the investigation and recounting of one of its significant incidents, as well as the reflections that the author outlines in his exploration of said connections.

2. Genre contradictions

In spite of their indicated similarities, the comparative study of both works also brings to light a series of differences that affects our understanding of its respective genres. While Javier Cercas builds his theories regarding the coup through an analysis of sources that are gathered in a bibliographic section, in *HHhH* the analysis of the sources is less rigorous than in *Anatomía*. If Cercas’ work aspires to be read as a novel, an objective that has not remained free from debate (Pujante Segura and Martínez Arnaldos, 2010; Romeu Guallart, 2011), Binet’s purpose is to construct a novel in which methodical rigour does not always seem to be a fundamental requisite. In its first edition, *HHhH* did not include a bibliography, as is also true of its Spanish and English translations, whereas the Italian version includes photographic material, a glossary and a ‘testi citati’ in which the author gathers the sources he used in reconstructing the historical storyline. This emphasises the existence of a choice of genre, but also the contradictions when it comes to combining them given that the inclusion of a bibliography might lead the reader to

believe that the work is being distanced from the novel. But there is a more interesting detail that to a large degree affects the reception of the genres in *HHhH*. There is a work entitled *The Assassination of Heydrich* (1973) by Miroslav Ivanov, that meticulously reconstructs the build up to Operation Anthropoid and its outcome through the testimonies of some of its survivors. On this, Binet has the following to say:

Al releer uno de los libros que constituyen la base de mi documentación, un conjunto de testimonios sobriamente reunidos por un historiador checo, Miroslav Ivanov, bajo el título de *El atentado contra Heydrich*, publicado en la vieja colección verde «Aquel día» (en la que también se encuentran *El día más largo* y *¿Arde París?*), compruebo con estupor la cantidad de errores que tengo con respecto a Gabčík. (Binet, 2011: 129)

The reference to this work dissolves almost completely in the novel and does not even feature in the bibliography that the author includes in the Italian version. Yet Binet reproduces, almost word for word, the contents of Ivanov's work over the course of two hundred pages in *HHhH*, even to the point of copying passages such as the following:

En un piso de Praga, en el barrio de Smíchov, dos hombres esperan. El timbre de la puerta los sobresalta. Uno de ellos se levanta y va a abrir. Entra un hombre bastante alto para la época. Es Kubiš.

-Soy Ota —dice.

-Y yo Jindra —le responde uno de los hombres.

Jindra es el nombre de uno de los más activos grupos de resistencia organizado en el seno de una asociación deportiva y de cultura física, los Sokols.

Le sirven té al recién llegado. Los tres hombres guardan un denso silencio que acaba por romper el que se ha presentado con el nombre de la organización:

-Ha de saber que la casa está vigilada y que cada uno de nosotros tiene algo en su bolsillo.

Kubis sonrío y saca una pistola de su americana (en realidad, lleva otra en la manga):

-A mí también me gustan los juguetes —dice.

-¿De dónde viene usted?

-No puedo decírselo.

-¿Por qué?

-Nuestra misión es secreta.

-Pero ya le ha confiado a varias personas que usted venía de Inglaterra...

-¿Y qué?

Imagino un silencio.

-No se sorprenda por nuestra desconfianza, no carecemos de agentes provocadores en este país. (Binet, 2011: 220-221)

-I am Ota, he said.

-And I am Jindra, I replied.

-We shook hands, each watching the other, Pechacek brought tea as we drank it in silence —the conversation would not get under way. I made up my mind to start.

-I'd just like to point out that this house is guarded and that each of us has something in his pocket.

He smiled, and without a word took a pistol from his jacket. Then he

added:
-I'm fond of these gadgets, too.
-Where do you come from?
-I can't tell you.
-Why not?
-Our mission is secret.
-But you've already told several people that you came from England.
-What of it?
-You mustn't be surprised at our lack of trust. There are a good many agents provocateurs in this country. (Ivanov, 1973: 34-35)

This fits in with the idea of reproducing dialogue when it comes from reliable sources (Binet 2011: 30-31), but the debt to this work is immense and the absence of references to the same could reveal that once he started writing his novel, Binet was able to find almost everything relating to 'Operation Anthropoid', therefore perhaps the most convenient thing was to make Ivanov's work pass unnoticed and divert the attention towards the figure of Heydrich. However, the historiographical value of his work continues, hidden, though clearly questioned given the lack of rigour in the use of his sources.

On the other hand, all the author-narrator's interventions in the process of constructing the novel revolve around how to avoid creating an historical novel without abandoning the field of the historical genres. This initial approach gives way to fiction, with the personification of the author in the recreation of certain strictly historical scenes. Binet finely tunes the genres in combination ensuring that fiction respects nothing and that, if he visualises the first encounter between the two paratroopers who assassinate Heydrich (of whom there seems to exist no documentation), it would mean the victory of fiction over reality (Binet, 2011: 131). The final chapter of the work seems to depict this encounter through the dreamt up scene in which both characters travel by boat to England to join the government forces in exile. Does Binet hope to conclude that it is impossible to novelise historical events without fiction? It is very possible that the author wished to show the narrator's failure so long as it constitutes a character in the novelistic account, but having arrived at that point Binet had already demonstrated more than adequately that it is possible to move within the sphere of historical genres without needing to fall into writing an historical novel.

And if in Binet the end of the historical account coincides with the end of the novelistic account (the death of Heydrich and of the paratroopers), in Cercas the end of the historical account coincides with the end of the thesis. And although the author grants himself irregular stylistic licences one would not find in historical texts, such as comparative structures or redundancies, it is possible for the reader of *Anatomía* to encounter a lack of alternation between narrative passages and descriptive passages, which represents, in a

way, one of the very features of novelistic narration (Todorov, 1990). This is something we do find in other works by the same author, such as, for example, *Soldados de Salamina* (2001) or even in *El impostor* (2014), two works technically linked to *Anatomía*. In this sense, the argumentative approach delimits the narrative approach, which is why the tension of the narrative elements seems to be placed at the service of the former.

Finally, there are those who have seen in the work of Cercas an example of chronicle closer to journalism than to the historical genre. The almost thirty interceding years between the composition of the work and the coup d'état could challenge the value of *Anatomía* as a journalistic text, despite the author's frequent forays into journalism. Cercas himself speaks of the reporters of the time and of their work from Congress at the start of the eighties, so imagining a journalist writing thirty years after an event from that period seems quite anachronistic. At least, this is what Kerrane and Yagoda (1998) suggested when they presented the conditions a text must meet in order to be considered literary journalism, one of which was proximity between the events and the writing process. The case of *Anatomía* contrasts with examples such as *Ten Days That Shook the World* (1919) by John Reed, about the 1917 Russian Revolution, written and published almost immediately afterward, and with the aforementioned novel by Capote, *In Cold Blood* (1966), published six years after the Kansas homicide. The almost thirty years separating the writing of *Anatomía* from the events of the coup bring this work closer to the historical genre.

3. New directions in contemporary narrative

If works such as *Pamela*, *Tristram Shandy*, *The Man Without Qualities* or *Pale Fire* put different types of discourse at the service of the novel, while keeping its functions reduced to one metafunction (generally speaking, those discourses did not fulfil within the text the function they could fulfil outside of themselves), the works analysed represent an attempt to maintain the three functions of genre in a fluid transition. In this way the dominant genre shifts from one genre to another in a triangular narrative that improves upon earlier models in what can be considered a rupture or an expansion of the canon. In combining essay and novel, Cercas and Binet have incorporated a genre that reinforces this relation and favours transgenre and interdisciplinary links between historical and literary genres, challenging the boundaries imposed up to that point in the field of historiography. In order to do this, it has been essential to incorporate the figure of the author into the text, representing the narrator who, by way of explanation of his objectives and the results of his investigations, will

succeed in satisfactorily exploring themes that previously remained limited to historians. History can now be treated appropriately without resorting to fiction and without necessarily abandoning the sphere of the novel.

Although the rigour of the historiographical component is questionable in *HHhH*, it is impossible to deny the truthfulness of the facts and (to the degree that the unjust appropriation of material allows) the investigation that the author demonstrates having carried out. Likewise, the novelistic component in *Anatomía de un instante* can have a weak presence, but the structure of the work and the complex portrayal of characters ensures that behind it can be discerned a clear choice of genre on the author's part. In fact, in Cercas we can observe a transition in his treatment of historical themes that goes from *Soldados de Salamina*, in which a young journalist reconstructs the facts that allow Rafael Sánchez Mazas, founder of the Falange, to escape with his life from a firing squad, to *El impostor*, in which Cercas himself appears fully characterised as a hardworking man investigating the scandal caused by Enric Marco, the man who feigned having survived the concentration camps and who presided over an important survivor's association. Although that young journalist from *Soldados de Salamina* was already merging with the figure of Cercas himself, it was not until *Anatomía* that the representation of the author was decisive through the use of a difficult configuration, playing with the role of the 'I' in order to advance the analysis of recent history in Spain. Subsequently, the solid characterisation of the author himself and of his son, converted into strong characters of a non-fiction account in *El impostor* will come to confirm that the formula of *Anatomía* was valid for this purpose.

That necessity to create a mixed genre in which all literary manifestations converge, which found an important model in Sterne's work, has been justified over the centuries and crystallised in specific combinations of genres. The novel, which was established as a genre thanks to the 19th century model and which, through various transitions, returned to express itself thanks to the adoption of the objective technique on the part of literary journalism, now accesses the historiographical genres. And it does so by taking advantage of the same technique, although this time through use of the first person – which refuses that subjectivity so characteristic of the testimonial genres – and of the wide range of possibilities that interdiscursive connections offer. Both objectivity and interdiscursivity represent, precisely, the two significant elements that have determined the evolution of the novel throughout the past century and which point definitively towards a new way of looking to the future.

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